

**MINUTES OF THE  
ENHANCEMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION TASK FORCE**

Tuesday, April 30, 2002 - 9:00 a.m. - Room 303 State Capitol

**Members Present:**

Sen. Howard A. Stephenson, Senate Chair  
Rep. Matt Throckmorton, House Chair  
Sen. Paula F. Julander  
Sen. Millie M. Peterson  
Sen. Carlene Walker  
Rep. Marda Dillree  
Rep. Bradley T. Johnson  
Rep. Patricia W. Jones  
Rep. Karen W. Morgan  
Ms. Janet A. Cannon  
Ms. Joyce W. Richards

**Members Absent:**

Sen. Dave L. Gladwell  
Sen. Bill Wright  
Rep. Margaret Dayton  
Rep. Gordon E. Snow

**Staff Present:**

Ms. Constance C. Steffen, Research Analyst  
Mr. Dee S Larsen, Associate General Counsel  
Ms. Wendy L. Bangerter, Legislative Secretary

**Note:** A list of others present and a copy of materials can be found at <http://www.image.le.state.ut.us/imaging/history.asp> or contact the Committee secretary, Wendy Bangerter, at 538-1032

**1. Call To Order**

Chair Stephenson called the meeting to order at 9:10 a.m.

**MOTION:** Sen. Peterson moved to approve the minutes of November 12, 2001. The motion passed unanimously.

Mr. Larsen and Ms. Steffen reported on action taken by the Legislature in the 2002 General Session on legislation initiated by the task force.

**2. Efficiency and Effectiveness Study of the Utah State Office of Education**

Superintendent Steven O. Laing, Utah State Office of Education (USOE), reviewed the findings and recommendations of a study conducted by MGT of America, Inc., regarding the efficiency and effectiveness of the USOE. Mr. Laing reviewed the executive summary previously distributed to the committee members. He distributed a summary of MGT's recommendations, noting whether each one was going to be implemented or not, whether it was going to be held until such time that it could be implemented, or if implementation had already been completed. Superintendent Laing reported that the USOE (Utah State Office of Education) staff was reduced by 15 positions due to budget cuts and that the "Efficiency and Effectiveness Study of the Utah State Office of Education" found the USOE to be understaffed by two positions.

Supt. Laing reported that the major recommendation of the study was that the USOE must more clearly define its role as a regulatory agency, and he discussed actions the Office has taken in response to this recommendation. The USOE has identified various reports and information it is required to compile under Utah law. They are in the process of reviewing those requirements and will recommend to the Legislature whether some of those reports should be eliminated or modified. Supt. Laing noted that 27 bills passed during the 2002 General Session that impacted the USOE's responsibilities. Assignments have been made to track and implement the requirements of each bill by September 1. He reported that

on May 15, a workshop will be held for school districts to discuss requirements of the block grants.

### **3. Reading Assessments**

Chair Stephenson explained that the goal of the state is to have every student in the state's public education system reading on or above grade level by the end of the third grade and that since the Utah Performance Assessment System for Students (U-PASS) was implemented two years ago, comments about its success or problems it has created are being received and considered.

Dr. Bonnie Morgan, USOE, explained that to determine the reading level of a first or second-grader, it is necessary to conduct an individual oral reading test. She explained that when teachers are trained how to conduct it and are more comfortable with it, the test should take 20-30 minutes for each student.

Ms. Wendy Bromley, president, Jordan Education Association (JEA), expressed concern on behalf of Jordan School District teachers on how much instruction time is lost due to student testing. She emphasized that teachers like the reading assessments but some would prefer they be administered at the beginning of the school year instead of in the spring. In addition to moving the test's required window to the fall, she stated that teachers have also requested they have two full days, beyond the 180 instructional days, to administer the individual reading tests. She distributed a handout, "Less Time to Teach More?"

Dr. Lawrence noted this is the first year for the individual reading assessments. She expressed hope that in subsequent years there will be additional training given to teachers. She explained that the individual reading assessment is given in conjunction with the criterion referenced test (CRT), because neither instrument in and of itself gives enough information to determine a student's reading grade level.

Ms. Phyllis Sorenson, president, Utah Educators Association (UEA), responded that Ms. Bromley's comments were representative of JEA's perspective and that the UEA does not perceive this issue the same way. She explained that the House of Delegates is UEA's governing body and the issue of when to give the individual reading assessment was discussed at their April 27, 2002 meeting. She stated that delegates were divided as to when to give the test, but the majority voted to leave testing in the spring in conjunction with the CRT's.

### **4. Task Force Studies for 2002**

Members of the Task Force reviewed a list of education study items listed in S.J.R. 15, "Master Study Resolution." They commented on topics that they felt need to be given more attention. Chair Stephenson stated that in order to avoid duplication, staff will prepare a suggested list of items to study once the Education Interim Committee has determined its topics of study for the interim.

### **5. Other Business**

The Task Force scheduled Tuesday, May 21, 2002 and Tuesday, June 18, 2002 at 9:00 a.m. for the next two meetings. Staff will present a tentative schedule at the next meeting for the remainder of the interim period.

### **6. Adjourn**

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**MOTION:** Sen. Peterson moved to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unanimously with Sen. Julander, Rep. Dillree, Rep. Jones, and Board Member Cannon absent for the vote. Chair Stephenson adjourned the meeting at 12:04 p.m.